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Expanding Access to Transformative Music Education in Los Angeles' Underserved Communities

Dates of Proposed Period of Support: January 2025 through December 2025

Cost Required for Initial Budget Period: \$165,000

Submission Date: November 5, 2024

Presented By: Grace Alai

Project Title: Expanding Access to Transformative Music Education in Los Angeles' Underserved Communities

Applicant Name: Harmony Project

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Abstract

Established in 2001, Harmony Project is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit organization that provides high-quality, no-cost music instruction to underserved students. With a mission to foster social, emotional, and academic growth, Harmony Project engages students in music education and ensemble experiences, aiming to create lasting community change and prepare youth for higher education. The program currently serves over 4,100 participants across 48 student ensembles, supported by 120 teaching artists, 70 peer mentors, and 75 community partnerships. Our program has demonstrated a life-changing impact, with graduates achieving a remarkable 98% college acceptance rate.

Harmony Project seeks \$165,000 in funding to expand its reach in providing free, high-quality music instruction and holistic support to students in underserved communities throughout Los Angeles. We aim to increase enrollment by 10%, enhancing college preparation, mentorship, and emotional wellness services.

This funding will support the following objectives:

1. **Expand Access to Music Education:** Enroll an additional 400 students in high-need areas, bringing total participation to over 4,500.
2. **Enhance Student Support Services:** Increase resources for college preparation, mentorship, and mental wellness programs, targeting 100 students for tailored support.
3. **Strengthen Community Partnerships:** Forge 10 new partnerships with schools and organizations to broaden our support network and facilitate outreach.

In Los Angeles, many youth from low-income neighborhoods face barriers to accessing quality arts education. Harmony Project bridges this gap by providing sustained, year-round music instruction that fosters both musical and personal growth. Our comprehensive approach not only enhances students' musical skills but also equips them with critical life skills such as discipline, teamwork, and emotional resilience.

By funding this project, we will empower more students as community leaders, musicians, and future change-makers, ensuring they can overcome obstacles and thrive. With your support, Harmony Project can continue to inspire and uplift underserved youth, creating a brighter future for all.

Statement of Need

In Los Angeles, youth from low-income neighborhoods face barriers that limit access to quality arts education. Schools in under-resourced areas often lack the funding for dedicated music programs, creating an opportunity gap that disproportionately affects students from marginalized backgrounds. This disparity limits students' development of critical skills such as discipline, creativity, and teamwork—skills that music education uniquely cultivates.

Research highlights the importance of music education in supporting academic success and emotional well-being. Studies have shown that students who participate in music programs demonstrate improved cognitive skills, higher test scores, and enhanced social-emotional learning outcomes. Yet, access to these programs remains limited, particularly in low-income communities. Harmony Project's mission is to bridge this gap, providing students with sustained, year-round instruction that fosters both musical and personal growth.

As demand continues to grow, our capacity and resources must expand accordingly. By increasing funding, we can provide this transformative opportunity to more students and build upon our comprehensive support structure, ensuring that students succeed in music, academics, and life.

Project Description

Project Goals and Objectives

Harmony Project's expansion efforts will focus on three key goals:

1. **Expand Access to Music Education:** Reach an additional 400 students in high-need areas of Los Angeles, increasing total active participation to over 4,500.
2. **Enhance Student Support Services:** Increase resources for college prep, peer mentorship, and mental wellness programs, aiming to serve 100 students with tailored college and career guidance while promoting resilience and self-confidence.
3. **Strengthen Community Partnerships:** Forge 10 new partnerships with schools, nonprofits, and community organizations to broaden our support network and facilitate collaborative outreach, ensuring each student benefits from a full ecosystem of educational support.

Project Timeline and Activities

1. **Capacity Building and Enrollment Expansion**

Months 1-3:

- Expand instructional space and recruit additional teaching artists to accommodate new students.
- Increase enrollment efforts through outreach in target neighborhoods and schools.

2. Curriculum and Program Development

Months 3-6:

- Strengthen curriculum offerings by integrating college readiness, emotional wellness, and mentorship into weekly lessons.
- Collaborate with school districts to align curriculum with students' academic goals, supporting improved school attendance and grades.
- Create peer mentor roles for advanced students to support younger participants, providing leadership development opportunities.

3. Outreach and Partnership Expansion

Months 6-12:

- Develop 10 new partnerships with community centers, schools, and arts organizations in underserved areas to facilitate student recruitment and support.
- Launch a targeted outreach campaign to increase program visibility, collaborating with partners to distribute program materials and inform families about the benefits of music education.

Anticipated Outcomes and Success Metrics

- **Increased Reach:** Serve an additional 400 students, bringing total active participation to 4,500 students.
- **College and Career Readiness:** Maintain a 98% college acceptance rate, providing 100 students with college counseling, scholarship application assistance, and guidance on career pathways.
- **Enhanced Peer Mentorship:** Enroll 100 students as peer mentors to build leadership skills and increase community engagement, helping students contribute as role models in their neighborhoods.
- **Improved Academic and Behavioral Performance:** Track improvements in school attendance, grades, and self-confidence, collaborating with teachers and parents to monitor and support each student's progress.

Budget

Proposed Budget Breakdown

Budget Category	Details	Amount
<i>Program Expansion (Space & Resources)</i>	Rent for additional rehearsal spaces, purchase of musical instruments and materials for new students	\$60,000

<i>Teaching Artist Compensation</i>	Salaries for additional music instructors and peer mentor supervisors	\$45,000
<i>Curriculum Development & Materials</i>	Educational materials, music sheets, mentorship resources, and college readiness guides	\$30,000
<i>Outreach & Community Engagement</i>	Campaign costs, community event sponsorships, and promotional materials	\$15,000
<i>Program Evaluation & Impact Tracking</i>	Software for data collection, independent evaluator fees, and reporting tools	\$15,000
<i>Total Funding Requested</i>		\$165,000

Justification of Costs

This budget is designed to sustainably expand Harmony Project’s capacity to deliver high-quality music education while enhancing program infrastructure. Funding for space and resources will ensure safe, accessible learning environments. Increased teaching artist compensation and curriculum resources will enable us to maintain our program’s high standards as we grow. Additional funds for outreach and evaluation will support continuous improvement and long-term sustainability, ensuring we reach and positively impact even more students.

Program Evaluation

To ensure Harmony Project achieves its goals and demonstrates impact, we will use a comprehensive evaluation framework incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data.

1. Metrics of Success:

- **Enrollment and Attendance:** Track increases in program enrollment and retention, with a target of 4,500 active students by the end of the year.
- **Academic Performance:** Monitor improvements in students’ school attendance, grades, and behavior, collecting data from schools and feedback from teachers.
- **College and Career Readiness:** Document the number of graduating seniors accepted into colleges, with a continued target of 98% acceptance.

2. Data Collection Methods:

- **Pre- and Post-Program Surveys:** Conduct surveys with students, parents, and teaching artists to assess changes in students’ self-confidence, leadership skills, and social-emotional well-being.

- **School and Academic Data:** Collaborate with partner schools to obtain data on students' attendance, grades, and participation in academic programs.
 - **Alumni Tracking:** Establish a database to track alumni outcomes, including college acceptance rates, scholarship awards, and career pathways.
3. **Independent Evaluation and Reporting:**
An independent evaluator will conduct quarterly assessments to ensure that program activities align with intended goals. A detailed evaluation report will be created at the project's end, summarizing program achievements, challenges, and areas for growth. Insights from the report will guide future expansions and refinements.
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Sustainability Plan

Harmony Project's sustainability plan focuses on building a network of support from community stakeholders, schools, and individual donors to secure ongoing funding for program growth and maintenance.

- **Community Partnerships:** Harmony Project has strong collaborations with over 75 local schools and organizations, which contribute to program reach and student support. New partnerships established during this expansion will strengthen our network, creating a community-centered support system.
 - **Diverse Funding Sources:** Harmony Project actively pursues funding from foundations, corporate sponsorships, and government grants to diversify revenue streams. This proposal represents one component of a multi-year funding strategy, ensuring financial stability and program sustainability.
 - **Alumni Engagement:** Harmony Project maintains close relationships with alumni, many of whom serve as peer mentors and advocates for music education. This alumni network will continue to grow, with former students supporting current participants as tutors, guest speakers, and community role models.
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Conclusion

Harmony Project is deeply committed to providing transformative music education to students who otherwise lack access to these life-changing opportunities. With a track record of success, our program has empowered students across Los Angeles to excel academically, grow personally, and inspire their communities. Your support will allow us to reach more youth, expand our services, and strengthen our impact, ensuring that every child in Los Angeles has the chance to experience the power of music.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, leadership team, staff, teaching artists, volunteers, and especially our students, Harmony Project is incredibly grateful for the opportunity to request \$165,000 in funding to expand our music education program for Los Angeles' underserved communities. If funded, the impact of this project will resonate throughout Los Angeles, empowering hundreds more students to overcome barriers and thrive as

musicians, scholars, and future leaders in the years to come. With your partnership, we can work toward a future where every student can pursue their dreams and contribute to a more vibrant, equitable world.